

# Queen Amanirenas

*c. first century BC*



## HOW SHE AFFECTED THE WORLD

Queen Amanirenas was a fierce warrior queen. She led her nation into battle with the Romans and gained respect as a Kushite ruler. Her defeat of the Romans secured her place in history.



*As you read the biography below, think about how Queen Amanirenas's bravery helped her become such a powerful woman.*

Unlike most ancient civilizations, women often ruled in the kingdom of Kush. Women in general played an important role in Kushite society. One reason why women were held in such high esteem may have been because many Kushites were followers of the goddess Isis. During that time, most other cultures worshiped male gods. In Egypt, for example, most people worshiped Ra, the god of the sun, who was male.

Kushite queens had more power than female rulers of other societies of the era. They were warrior queens, which was very different from the mostly ceremonial role taken by queens in most other nations. In the first century BC a brave and powerful queen controlled Kush. Her name was Queen Amanirenas.

In 24 BC Queen Amanirenas accompanied her armies on a raid of Egypt, which was controlled by the Romans at the time. The Romans had one of the most powerful armies in the world. Queen Amanirenas led her warriors into battle and defeated three groups of Roman soldiers. As an insult, Queen Amanirenas removed the head of a statue of Caesar and brought it back to Kush.

Queen Amanirenas lost an eye in that battle and became known to the Romans as One-Eyed Kandace. Kandace meant “queen mother.” This injury did not stop Queen Amanirenas. She continued to lead her armies in other battles against the Romans.

Rome eventually defeated the Kush, but the Romans feared that the Kushites might strike back. Rome and Kush agreed to a treaty and peace existed between the nations for a time. A few years later, however, Queen Amanirenas broke that treaty and launched another attack on Egypt.

Queen Amanirenas then sent her ambassadors to meet with Roman emperor Augustus Caesar, who agreed to Amanirenas’s demands. The Romans eventually withdrew from most of Kush.

### WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

- 1. Drawing Conclusions** How might the religious beliefs of the Kushites influence their view of women as rulers?

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- 2. Expressing and Supporting a Point of View** How do you think Queen Amanirenas displayed bravery in her role as a warrior queen?

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### ACTIVITY

Draw a picture of what you think Queen Amanirenas may have looked like. Then make a collage surrounding the drawing using pictures and words to describe the queen.